



মণিপুরৰ শিক্ষা বিভাগ (সংস্কৃত)

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (S)**

Government of Manipur

**CLASS X**  
**ENGLISH LITERATURE READER**  
**CHAPTER 4 - THE IMP AND THE PEASANT'S BREAD**  
**(LEO TOLSTOY)**

**SOLUTIONS**

**EXERCISES**

**A. From your understanding of the story, answer the following questions:**

- i. The imp's intention in stealing the bread was :**
- (a) He was hungry and wanted to eat it.
  - (b) He wanted to show that the peasant was a virtuous man.
  - (c) He wanted the peasant to curse and commit a sin.
  - (d) He wanted to show to the Devil that not all men are bad.

**Ans: (c) he wanted the peasant to curse and commit a sin.**

- ii. In the first year the Imp suggested that the peasant should sow corn**
- (a) On the hill.
  - (b) In a marshy place.
  - (c) In the plain.
  - (d) By the river.

**Ans: (b) in a marshy place.**

- iii. The peasant carried the drinks himself because**
- (a) His wife was tired.
  - (b) The guests wanted him to carry the drinks.
  - (c) He was afraid that his wife would spill the drinks.
  - (d) It was customary for the host to do so.

**Ans: (c) he was afraid that his wife would spill the drinks.**

- iv. After the third glass of drink, the peasants behaved like**
- (a) Wolves.
  - (b) Foxes.
  - (c) Swine.
  - (d) Tigers.

**Ans: (c) swine**



- v. **The blood of the beasts is always in man. But it is kept in bounds**  
(a) As long as he does not have enough corn  
(b) As long as he has enough corns for his needs.  
(c) As long as he has more than his needs.  
(d) As long as he has no corn at all.

**Ans: (b) as long as he has enough corns for his needs.**

**B. Complete the following with information from the text:**

- i. The imp was sad because he failed to make the peasant sin and he went to report what had happened to the Devil, his Master.  
ii. The Devil said that if within three years the Imp failed he would have the imp ducked in holy water.  
iii. In the second year, the peasant sowed the corns on the hill according to the advice of the imp.  
iv. The Devil said to the imp that if the drink made peasants so foxy then he must have put in the drink fox's blood.  
v. After the second drink, the peasants dropped oily speeches but they began to snarl at one another.  
vi. The pleasure that the imp showed to the peasant was drinking.

**C. Answer the following questions briefly:**

- i. **How did the peasant react when his bread has been stolen?**  
**Ans:** The peasant felt sorry to lose his bread which was his breakfast. But he consoled himself by saying that whoever took it must have needed it and that it could not be helped. He further said that he would not die of hunger without his breakfast and prayed that the bread might do well to the person who took it.
- ii. **What was the imp's aim in stealing the bread?**  
**Ans:** The imp's aim in stealing the bread was to make the peasant commit a sin by cursing the person who stole it. He wanted the peasant to swear and call on the Devil.
- iii. **What did the Devil fear when he heard of the imp's failure?**  
**Ans:** When the Devil heard of the imp's failure to make the peasant sin rather the peasant wished the person stealing the bread well, he was afraid that the peasant got the better of the imp which meant the imp failed to understand his business. Also if the other peasants and their wives after them took to that sort of thing, it would mean the end of the Devil in this world.



iv. **Why did the imp turn himself into a labouring man?**

**Ans:** When the imp failed to corrupt the peasant, he was threatened by the Devil of dire consequences because it would mean the end of their business. The Devil gave him three years to put things right. The horrified imp scampered back to earth to redeem his fault. In order to be close to the peasant, the imp turned himself into a labouring man.

v. **How did the peasant get more corn than he needed?**

**Ans:** The imp, in the guise of a labouring man, took service with the poor peasant. The first year, he advised the peasant to sow corn in a marshy place. The year turned out a very dry one. The crops of the other peasants failed but the peasant's corn grew thick, tall and full eared. He had much corn that year. In the second year also, following the advice of the imp the peasant sowed his corn on the hill and reaped a rich harvest while others' failed because of a wet summer. Thus, by following the advice of the imp, the poor peasant got more corn than he needed.

vi. **Describe the effects of the first two glasses of drink on the peasant and his friends.**

**Ans:** After having the first drink, the peasant and his rich friends began to make false, flattery speeches to one another. The drink made them so foxy that they began to cheat each other. Like foxes, they wagged their tails and tried to get round one another. The second drink made them behave like savage wolves. Their talks became wilder and rougher. They began to abuse and snarl at one another. Soon, they took to fighting and punched one another's noses. The host joined in the fight and he too got well beaten. These are the effects of the first two glasses of drink on the peasant and his friends.

vii. **'Wait a bit-the best is yet to come'. What was the best?**

**Ans:** After having their third glass of drink, the peasants became quite like brutes. They muttered and shouted, not knowing why and not listening to one another. Then the party began to break up. The guests staggered down the street. The host-peasant went out to speed his guests but he fell on his nose into a puddle, smeared himself from top to toe and lay there grunting like a hog. This, according to the imp, was the best.

**D. Answer the following questions in about 80 words each:**

i. **'That's the man who did not grudge his only crust.'**

**Bring out the significance of the imp's statement.**

**Ans:** The imp corrupted the peasant and thus redeemed himself. Then, he went to his master, the Devil and asked him to come and see for himself the result of his work. So the Devil and the imp went to the peasant's house.

There, they saw a party going on. The peasant had invited his well-to-do neighbours and was treating them to a drink. The drink was made after crushing the excess corn and distilling spirit from it. The honest peasant had become wealthy after following the advice of the imp that he looked for ways to pleasure himself by using God's good gifts to him. At this time, the fox's, wolf's and swine's blood in him all came out and he became a beast himself. This we saw when he rebuked his wife angrily in front of others for being careless and only



because she stumbled against a table and spilt a glassful of wine while offering the drink to the guests. The imp promptly pointed this act to the Devil reminding him that it was the same man who did not grudge his only crust when he lost it. It is significant that the imp made the statement because it shows the true nature of man. When we have less, we don't mind even if we lose whatever little we have but when we have more than we need, we become greedy and savage and the kindness and humanity in us is lost.

ii. *'I can't find drink for everyone who comes along.'*

**Comment on the change in the character of the speaker in the light of the given statement.**

**Ans:** The imp corrupted the peasant and thus redeemed himself. Then, he went to his master, the Devil and asked him to come and see for himself the result of his work. So, the Devil and the imp went to the peasant's house.

There, they saw a party going on. The peasant had invited his well-to-do neighbours and was treating them to a drink. The drink was made after crushing the excess corn and distilling spirit from it. The honest peasant had become wealthy after following the advice of the imp that he looked for ways to pleasure himself by using God's good gifts to him. At this time, the fox's, wolf's and swine's blood in him all came out and he became a beast himself. This, we saw when an uninvited poor peasant, returning from work, sat down among the others as he would like to have a drop of wine after his day's work.

His mouth was watering but instead of offering a drink, the host muttered that he could not find drink for everyone who came along. The peasant was a completely changed man. He entertained his wealthy friends but he didn't want to spare a little on the poor peasant. The Devil was pleased with the handiwork because it was the same man who did not grudge his only crust when he lost it.

It is significant to note here that under the influence of wealth, a man if he is not careful, loses himself and becomes a brute. It shows the true nature of man. When we have less, we don't mind even if we lose whatever little we have but when we have more we become greedy and savage and the kindness and humanity in us is lost.

iii. *'The blood of the beast is always in man.'*

**Write how the imp shows it.**

**Ans:** After the imp was satisfied that he had redeemed himself by transforming the peasant into a complete sinner, he went to his master and asked him to come and see for himself the result of his work. So the Devil and the imp went to the peasant's house.

There, they witnessed a party hosted by the peasant for his rich friends. At the party, the host scolded his wife for spilling a glassful of wine while offering drinks to others. He also muttered meanly when a poor peasant asked for a drop of wine. As all the guests and the host had rounds of drinks, they began behaving like animals (foxes, wolves and swine) -abusive, savage, wilder, louder and even took to fighting and landing in the mud.

The devil was astonished to see all these. He was convinced that the drink must have been made from the blood of the beasts to make the men act so beastly. The imp explained that he did no such thing. All he did was to make the peasant have more corn than he needed and then to convince him to turn the God's gift of corn to idle liquor. The imp knew that the



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blood of the beast is always in man but it is kept in bounds as long as he has only enough corns for his needs. That is why the poor peasant did not grudge his crust when it was stolen. But when he had corn left over, he looked for ways to get pleasure out of it. The imp was serious in his business and used the situation to his advantage and ruined man in return. He showed the peasant how God's good gifts could be used to make liquor. The imp knew that when liquor enters a man's body, the blood of the beasts comes out and as long as man goes on drinking, he will always be a beast. In the story, the drunk man acted like beasts by being savage and fighting with one another.

iv. **Bring out the moral of the story 'The Imp and the Peasant's Bread'.**

**Ans:** '*The Imp and the Peasant's Bread*' is written by *Leo Tolstoy* in the form of a parable. It deals with the fact that every human being however good he may be has a devil lying dormant in him. The story tells us that under the influence of alcoholism, man's beast-like nature comes to the fore. There is much wisdom in what the imp told the Devil. He said that the blood of the beasts is always in man but it is kept in bounds as long as man has only enough corns to meet his needs. But when he has excess he looks for ways for getting pleasure out of God's good gifts and thus makes liquor for pleasure which also brings out the animal traits in him.

When the peasant did not have much, he worked hard and did not mind the fact that someone had stolen his crust of bread. He consoled himself by saying that he would not die without it and that the one stealing the bread needed it. He did not get angry or curse the man. Rather he prayed that the bread did him good. He was such a good man with a noble heart. But when what he had exceeded what he needed, he got worried for its loss as it happened with his wife. He became quick to get angry and did not want to share his excess with others as when he did not want to offer a drop of wine to the poor, uninvited peasant. The peasant was not able to stand the test of adversity when he had much wealth. If he does not learn to share his wealth, it will bring him no good. And that brings out the beast in him and leads to his downfall. Thus, the story shows that surplus accumulation leads to the corruption of man and that is the philosophy which the writer wanted to impart to us.

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